

## Message Text

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FOR VEST AND BORIGHT

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, INFO ERDA GERMANTOWN, TOKYO,  
TAIPEI, IAEA VIENNA, APRIL 21, FROM SEOUL RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE S E C R E T SEOUL 2743

ERDA FOR FRIEDMAN: TOKYO FOR ERDA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD ENRG PARM MNUC TECH KS

SUBJECT: ROKG DESIRE FOR JOINT JAPANESE TAIWANESE ROK REGIONAL  
NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING FACILITY

1. SUMMARY: TOKYO ERDA SCIREP ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF PAID VISIT  
APRIL 17 ON ROK MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CHOI WHO  
EMPHASIZED KOREAN CONCERN OVER LACK POSITIVE ACTION ON  
NUCLEAR SPENT FUEL REPROCESSING AND WASTE DISPOSAL AND  
ARGUED STRONGLY FOR JOINT JAPAN, TAIWAN, KOREAN REGIONAL  
COOPERATION ON CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF SPENT FUEL  
REPROCESSING FACILITIES. HE STATED ROKG CONSIDERS US  
ASSISTANCE IN LAYING POLITICAL GROUNDWORK FOR THIS REGIONAL  
EFFORT CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF SUCH UNDERTAKING.

2. ROK SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MINISTER CHOI, HYONG-SUP,  
WITH BACKGROUND IN ENGINEERING, EXPRESSED FIRM CONVICTION

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THAT KOREA, JAPAN, TAIWAN, AND PERHAPS LATER OTHER COUNTRIES

IN EAST ASIA MUST BEGIN SERIOUS COOPERATIVE PLANNING FOR REGIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE FACILITIES, SPECIFICALLY, SPENT FUEL REPROCESSING AND WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES. MINISTER POINTED OUT OBVIOUS FACT THAT NONE OF THESE COUNTRIES WILL, FOR SOME TIME IN THE CASE OF JAPAN, AND FOR A LONGER TIME IN THE CASE OF OTHER EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES, HAVE AN INSTALLED NUCLEAR CAPACITY OF SUFFICIENT MAGNITUDE TO REQUIRE ITS OWN REPROCESSING FACILITIES, AND THAT A JOINT, COOPERATIVE APPROACH WOULD HAVE SEVERAL ADVANTAGES:

- A. IAEA SAFEGUARDS COULD BE MORE EASILY IMPOSED.
- B. A STANDARD DESIGN (PRESUMABLY US) WOULD BE USED RATHER THAN THE SEVERAL DIVERSE APPROACHES WHICH COULD RESULT FROM EACH COUNTRY GOING ITS OWN WAY.
- C. THE LIKELIHOOD OF ANOTHER "INDIA EVENT," TO QUOTE THE MINISTER, WOULD BE MINIMIZED BECAUSE OPEN COOPERATION ON AN ACCEPTED AND IAEA MONITORED DESIGN WOULD PRECLUDE CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES.

3. MINISTER CHOI INDICATED THAT THE KOREAN NUCLEAR POWER CORPORATION (KNPC - ALSO PREVIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS KAPCO) HAS BEEN PROMULGATED, THOUGH NOT YET IN BEING. KNPC WOULD BE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PIPELINE AS THE AGENCY WITH WHICH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTAL AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS WOULD MAKE LICENSING OR OTHER CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS. KNPC WOULD INITIALLY BE A COMPLETELY GOVERNMENT FINANCED ORGANIZATION, HOPEFULLY IN TIME BECOMING INDUSTRIAL IN COMPOSITION AND FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION. KNPC WOULD THEN BEGIN TO CONSTITUTE A KOREAN INDUSTRIAL BASE WHICH COULD PICK UP LICENSING ARRANGEMENTS AS IT DEVELOPED THE NECESSARY CAPABILITY.

4. THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT PREVIOUS PROPOSALS OF HIS FOR REGIONAL FUEL CYCLE COOPERATION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS TO JAPAN AS THE PRIME NUCLEAR INDUSTRIAL CAPABILITY IN THE AREA HAD NOT BEEN RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM BY JAPAN, AT LEAST AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE IT WAS BEING SUGGESTED BY KOREA. HE STATED THAT JAPANESE WORKING-LEVEL AND MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS APPEARED RECEPTIVE TO THE REGIONAL APPROACH. THEY APPARENTLY SEE IT AS AT LEAST PARTIAL SOLUTION TO OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL

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OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR POWER AND POSSIBLE GOOD LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF SITING SPENT FUEL RE-PROCESSING FACILITY. HE SUGGESTED US USE ITS GOOD OFFICES TO CONVINCE JAPAN OF THE MERITS OF THEIR (JAPAN) OWN IDEA, AND INDUCE JAPAN TO ENLIST THE PARTICIPATION OF THE DEVELOPING EAST ASIAN NUCLEAR COUNTRIES.

5. CHOI INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT NORTH KOREAN WOULD REGARD

SOUTH KOREA'S PARTICIPATION IN A COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT SUCH AS THIS AS EVIDENCE OF THEIR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR INTENTIONS. THIS WOULD, IN THE EYES OF THE MINISTER, DO MUCH TO EASE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

6. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS ATOMIC ENERGY BUREAU (AEB) DIRECTOR LEE BYONG-WHIE AND KOREA ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (KAERI) OFFICIALS AMPLIFIED ROK COMMITMENT TO NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE PROGRAM. LATTER STATED THAT IT IS NOW PLANNING A NEW ANNEX, THE KEY FEATURES OF WHICH WILL BE PILOT FUEL FABRICATION, REPROCESSING, AND WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES ALL DESIGNED TO PROVIDE ROK THE TECHNOLOGICAL BASE FOR LARGER SCALE COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS. AEB LEE MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT CONVERSATIONS THAT WHILE ROK NOW EXAMINING VARIOUS SOURCES FOR PILOT FUEL FACILITIES INCLUDING FRENCH NO QUOTE FINAL DECISION UNQUOTE HAS YET BEEN MADE.

7. WITH REGARD TO RECENT ROK DECISION TO RATIFY NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) AEB OFFICIALS OBSERVED THAT AS ARTICLES OF RATIFICATION WILL BE DEPOSITED ASAP (IN ORDER TO QUALIFY ROK FOR NPT MAY 1975 REVCON) AEB NOW FACED WITH RESPONSIBILITY OF DRAFTING ACCEPTABLE SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT AND ESTABLISHING RELATED DOMESTIC SAFEGUARDING INSTITUTIONS. TOKYO ERDA SCIREP WELCOMED ROK DECISION AND PROMISED ALL POSSIBLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN HELPING ROK SET UP SAFEGUARDS. ERDA SCIREP WILL REPORT SEPARATELY AND IN GREATER DETAIL ON ABOVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREATER US ROK COOPERATION.

8. COMMENT: ON EVENING 16 APRIL AMBASSADOR HAD BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER CHOI DEPLORING LACK OF CANDOR IN ROK-USG DISCUSSIONS OF NUCLEAR MATTERS, CITING PARTICULARLY  
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REPORTED PURCHASE OF FRENCH NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT. CHOI SAID THAT, WHILE WESTINGHOUSE AND GE REPS HAD BEEN ADVISED OF ROKG PLANS, HE FULLY ACKNOWLEDGED NEED FOR MUCH MORE OPEN RELATIONSHIP. HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ERDA SCIREP FIRST STEP IN THIS DIRECTION. SNEIDER UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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